

# QUEER RISK

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Part of  
Producing Liveness in Interesting Times

**the uncultured**

Queer risk is something I use to try and make sure people I work with are safe in and around their workspace. As a producer who predominantly works with queer people of colour, this is something I always have to think about.

**Thoughts:**

- How do people use language?
- How do people travel to spaces and at what times are they expected to travel?
- How do people respond to each other?
- Do people have a protocol for LGBTQIA+ aggravated issues?

Queer Risk assessment within theatre and performance is something that I feel needs to be discussed in more detail, and more frequently, as we continue to invite people to travel around the country and abroad to make art.

As we invite people to performance venues, to tour productions and to be hosted at performance festivals, we need to think about the processes we employ to ensure the safety of our artists and creative teams. Producers need to feel empowered with enough information, sufficient training and up-to-date processes to be able to facilitate safe travel, safe accommodation, safety in and around buildings and the overall safety of queer people when in their care.

As we talk more and more about what real inclusion and diversity can look like, we need to ensure that we are equipped for the diverse groups and marginalised people we are talking about. We need to make sure we are not putting anyone into dangerous situations, into situations in which people feel unwelcome, situations in which people feel disrespected and othered.

We have to be aware that people will need to move in and out of spaces, into areas that are new to them, countries that they may never have travelled to before.

People will become visible on their journeys, visible in and around their accommodation and visible to staff and the public.

If you are producing projects that invite marginalised groups into arts spaces, they will need to feel confident in venue staff as soon as they go through their doors, feel safe within the marketing campaigns and on their social media channels and feel protected by the organisation.

We talk so much about reaching priority places in the UK and we have great conversations about international work but as we take artists out of their spaces and into others, we need to make sure we can continue to do our best to consider their safety and really understand what to do when we come up against anti-queer behaviour both in person and online, and really recognise that some people don't go unnoticed as they leave the cities.

As hate crime is still on the rise in the UK, organisations need to understand what they are risk assessing for, what are the potential dangers to queer people and know exactly what they are going to do if and when issues arise. As a producer, we can collaborate with organisations/venues to ensure this is done properly.

**Key questions I think about and ask organisations when queer risk assessing:**

- Has your organisation taken part in gender intelligence training? If yes, please let us know which departments.
- If not, when will this take place?
- If it isn't organised to take place, please tell us why.

**This is to better understand:**

- The wider context for trans identities - how sex, gender and sexual orientation interact.
- Key terms and uses of language.
- Basic grounding in the legislation relating to the rights and responsibilities around trans identities.
- Beginning to explore how an organisation can ensure it is being trans-inclusive.

- Has your organisation taken part in LGBTQIA+ knowledge and confidence training? If yes please let us know which departments.
- If not, when will this take place?
- If it isn't organised to take place, please tell us why.

**This is to better have:**

- Greater knowledge of LGBTQIA+ identities and a nuanced understanding of people's experiences within the LGBTQIA+ community, as well as how power and privilege shapes those experiences.
- Developed understanding of what it means to be an ally and the opportunities and challenges involved in advocating for an identity that is not your own.
- Increased confidence in engaging and educating others on LGBTQIA+ inclusion and a practical action plan relevant to your role.

**Here is an example of a basic Queer Risk assessment sheet I made for The Cocoa Butter Club, which you might want to use as a basis to create your own:**

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing to manage the risk?	Do you need to do anything else to manage the risk?	Who will carry out the extra measures?
<p>Misgendering during entire relationship from initial meetings with producers.</p>	<p>Artists, organisers, queer guests, queer staff.</p> <p>People may be made to feel disrespected, overlooked and unseen. This can be seen as an act of violence.</p>	<p>Ensuring pronouns are visible in email signatures and are offered in every introduction.</p> <p>Making sure everyone who is being spoken about is comfortable being visible and feels safe being discussed.</p> <p>Ensuring all staff feel comfortable to ask for pronouns when meeting someone new.</p> <p>Ensuring all cast and theatre staff have been introduced by name and pronouns.</p> <p>Ensuring cast and staff feel comfortable enough with each other to correct mistakes without defensiveness (of person being corrected).</p>	<p>This task comes with training for all. Venues need to make sure that when they are inviting queer-led activity to the space, they have been on organisation-wide training and taken part in queer awareness courses.</p> <p><b>Stonewall</b> offer great training.</p>	<p>This is the responsibility of the producers on the project; the artistic directors to enforce and provide non-negotiable training, understand what is happening in the venue; and the staffing manager to ensure everyone is briefed.</p>
<p>Use of language in and around the building.</p>	<p>Artists, organisers, queer guests, queer staff.</p> <p>Derogatory language is threatening and unsafe.</p>	<p>Artists are briefed before being booked for shows and have a clear contract where we discuss the bottom line rules of The Cocoa Butter Club. We often share this with venues we work with to set the tone of the relationship.</p> <p>As the bookers, we make sure that everyone involved is aware of who the designated person is to be able to talk to or raise an issue with.</p>	<p>This task comes with training for all. Venues need to make sure that when they are inviting queer-led activity to the space, they have been on organisation-wide training and taken part in queer awareness courses.</p>	<p>This is the responsibility of the producers on the project; the artistic directors to enforce and provide non-negotiable training, understand what is happening in the venue; and the staffing manager to ensure everyone is briefed.</p>
<p>Homophobic /threatening behaviour.</p>	<p>Artists, organisers, queer guests, queer staff.</p> <p>Safety moving around the space, may be threatened. Safety travelling outside the venue may be threatened.</p>	<p>We have very clear rules of the space. We have a list of things that will not be tolerated. We would much rather stop a show than continue if someone is being threatening.</p> <p>Producers/Venue staff, Stage managers and artists are briefed on who is the first people on call from the venues.</p>	<p>Security for queer-led events sometimes needs to be more visible and present when presenting queer-led work.</p> <p>Security teams need to be fully briefed on what activities are taking place.</p>	<p>The artistic directors to enforce and provide non-negotiable training.</p>
<p>Staffing (bar staff, security, ushers).</p>	<p>Artists, organisers, queer guests, queer staff.</p> <p>People may feel unsafe/ threatened and unprotected.</p>	<p>All staff need to be fully briefed and involved in organisational training.</p> <p>We come up against many situations in which security companies are hired separately from bars and venues. This can mean they don't understand the activity taking place or the importance of being aware who may be moving around spaces. All teams need to be briefed on queer-led activity so they know how to respond accordingly.</p>	<p>Make sure all teams understand language; how to approach people; if people need to be searched, make sure it's respectfully.</p> <p>Brief the bar teams on the activity taking place.</p>	<p>Venue producers and organisation.</p>

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing to manage the risk?	Do you need to do anything else to manage the risk?	Who will carry out the extra measures?
Changing spaces.	Artists, organisers, queer guests, queer staff.	Make sure private changing areas are provided for all. A screen or a shared dressing room isn't always enough.	Make sure that if the space doesn't already exist, there are discussions on how to provide space.	Organisation.
Lack of designated quiet space.		TCBC will have a list of people's requirements and this will be shared with the venue. We will work together to be able to provide safe spaces.	Venues need to be able to provide designated space in which people can feel comfortable and have privacy.	Venue producers and organisation.
Bathrooms.	People may feel unsafe/threatened and unprotected.	Try and provide exclusive bathrooms - Non-gendered spaces.  If this isn't possible, make it clear throughout the event that everyone is welcome in each space.  Provide bathroom attendants to make sure the spaces are safe.		This is the responsibility of the producer on the project; the artistic director to understand what is happening in the venue; and the staffing manager to ensure everyone is briefed.
Travel in and out of local area and around the space.	People may feel unsafe/threatened and unprotected.	A designated person to report to and speak to who may be best to deal with the situation.  TCBC check travel routes, reputations of spaces/cities/towns. We check if there are known groups in the area that could be a problem.	Venues need to make sure they are aware of their local areas, research needs to be done into any local queer groups.	Organisation, venue producers and local producers.
Heckling (especially during show).	People may feel unsafe/threatened and unprotected.	Extra ushers and security staff, a zero tolerance policy. Announcements before, in interval and after show to remind everyone of zero tolerance policies.  Policies reiterated on posters around the building and on back of programmes.	All cast will be made aware of the process of a show being stopped or people being removed.	Ushers, general managers, security, venue producers.
Uninvited staring, unsolicited questions.	Artists on and off stage, queer guests, queer staff.	Ensuring the show/party has been appropriately marketed to the intended audiences.  Make sure the marketing materials make it clear what the show/event is about.  Provide Usher/Buddies to be in the space/party to be responsible for asking people to stop any behaviours making others uncomfortable.	All cast will be made aware of the process of a show being stopped or people being removed.  Everyone will be aware of the people who are the point of contact and who to tell when things feel unsafe. All cast will be advised not to approach a situation themselves.	Venue producers, Buddies, Event organisers.
Training and organisational efforts.	Artists on and off stage, queer guests, queer staff.	<b>The Power of Inclusive Workspaces</b> training at Stonewall.  <b>Influencing Social Change</b> - varied training courses from The Diversity Trust.		Organisation.

# This work was commissioned by The Uncultured as part of their project, *Producing Liveness in Interesting Times*.

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Made with support from Battersea Arts Centre, Theatre Bristol and funded by Arts Council England.

Special thanks to all of the contributors; those who attended our LADA DIY: Doing, Undoing and...doing again; Shit's Hit The Fan bursary recipients Beccy D'Souza, Natalie Chan, Rafia Hussain and Siân Baxter; Alan Lane; Eve Veglio-Hüner; Kate Craddock; Book Works; The New Wolsey Theatre, Ipswich; Producer Gathering; Regan Mott; Rob Sweeney; and Tracy Gentles.

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